

DMITRI BORGMANN, 1927-1985

In honor of Dmitri Borgmann's contributions to the field of logology, **Word Ways** published in February 1985 an issue entirely devoted to his work. The present issue, originally planned as a sequel, becomes a memorial instead, for he died of a heart attack at the age of 58, on December 7, 1985. Logology mourns his death.

Dmitri Borgmann earned the title Father of Logology for three contributions in the 1960s: he coined the word logology to describe the systematic study of wordplay; he codified its major component, letterplay, in his classic book Language on Vacation; and he edited the first year of **Word Ways**, a journal established as a forum for nascent logologists to exchange ideas with their fellow-enthusiasts.

Of all Dmitri's logological tenets, the one that engendered the strongest reaction among **Word Ways** readers was his firmly-held belief that there are many English words out there, unlisted by dictionaries, which should be used as needed by the logologist. In *Quelque Chose* in this issue, he raises the subject once more, pointing out that numerous dictionaries sanction the formation of unlisted RE- verbs. Few logologists would quarrel with this point, but many fear where such permissiveness may lead, especially in the hands of less-capable or less-scrupulous wordsmiths.

Less controversially, he believed that the computer would never replace human creativeness in the field of logology. For instance, he gleefully noted that only a tiny fraction of his AEGINRST transposals (**Word Ways**, November 1976) had been revealed by computer programs, and he was equally delighted that INSANE ANGLO WARLORD was a Reaganagram (**Word Ways**, May 1984) not found by the computer. In a sense, he was right: no one is ever likely to create a dictionary database sufficiently comprehensive to include his transpositions, because the economic payoff would never justify the cost of creating it. In the Reaganagram problem, the computer cannot winnow sparse wheat from much chaff; by analogy, monkeys strumming on typewriters may in theory reproduce the books in the British Museum, but who will sort them out from the far-more-numerous non-books?

A man may die, but his ideas survive. Though altered in many ways, not all to his liking, **Word Ways** is the spiritual descendant of Dmitri's vision of twenty years ago. The architect of **Word Ways** is best remembered by Christopher Wren's well-known epitaph in Saint Paul's Cathedral in London:

LECTOR, SI MONUMENTUM QUAERIS, CIRCUMSPICE